



Northfield Public Library

Director's Report

July 2019

Director's Report

Submitted by Teresa Jensen, Library Director

When we hire for new employees, we look for a very specific skill set and personality that best serves the library for public service work. We structure our interview questions to help us find the best candidate for the most ideal fit for the library. Library experience is helpful, but by no means the determining factor. Public service experience, whether in retail, schools, libraries or service work (restaurant work, wait staff) is our number one desirable attribute.

The questions that we ask can sometimes help to reveal an interviewee's philosophy of library work. "Why do you want to work at the library?" can elicit responses that can further or hinder an interviewee's chances of being hired. For example, "I like books" or "I like to read a lot" or "I like libraries because they are a shelter from the outside world" (all real answers) makes us question the underlying philosophy of the candidate. We look for staff who can connect with our patrons through their welcoming demeanor, who understand that libraries are about helping people find the answers to their questions, helping people with their goals of life-long learning, helping families develop good early-literacy basics, and helping people navigate through electronic resources, including the World Wide Web.

In addition, people may be selected for a specific skill that complements our existing staff's abilities. In the past, we have hired for staff skilled in social media, website design, Collection Development experience, bilingual language ability, or supervisory experience. We may not hire the person that is the best, all-around interviewee, although that happens often; we are looking for the best fit for the library.

We hire for teamwork and problem-solving skills. Can you give us an example of your work on a team? What role did you play? Can you describe a situation where you have experienced conflict with another employee, and how did you handle it? Do you ask for help when you need it, from your team or your supervisor, or do you try to handle it on your own?

We also hire for the future. We look at a person's potential; will they have the interest and ability to advance in positions of greater responsibility? Where do they want to be in 5 years? How adaptable and open to change might they be? Do they show initiative, excitement, and a positive attitude?

Over the last 6 years we have had many staff changes. Most of the staff now at the library have been hired with these skills, attributes and questions in mind. I hope you will agree with me that the library staff are a terrific team, and that the quotation (attributed to Aristotle) holds true in their regard; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Adult Services

Submitted by Katlin Heidgerken-Greene, Reference Services Manager

This month, I worked to help coordinate and host my first library programs for adults since joining the Northfield Public Library. One was a discussion of the book *With the End in Mind* by Kathryn Mannix, in conjunction with the Northfield Advanced Care Planning Advisory Council. It was held at Cakewalk on June 24 and was well attended (19 people)—in fact, we had to split into two groups for the discussion! I was very pleased with the great turnout and the engaging discussion about the book and important end-of-life issues. The group's next discussion is planned for November, book selection still to be determined. The other event was a June 26 Nalaxone Training program relating to the current opioid epidemic. A representative of the Steve Rummeler Hope Network presented along with a Rice County representative who spoke about local resources. The 12 people who attended gave positive feedback about the importance and utility of the information. I look forward to the opportunity to help support and host many more future enrichment programs for adults and am excited to help promote all the library offers.

This month, we decided that I will begin offering a weekly Saturday morning Family Storytime for Fall 2019 and I am excited to provide this additional early literacy program to the community as well.

Finally, reference staff have been hard at work creating great summer book displays, purchasing new materials, and providing reader's advisory for vacation and beach readers. We have also started handling new incoming phone calls from City Hall's phone tree as part of the library's information services, and welcomed the placement of a St. Olaf job shadow student. Summer is off to a great start!

Submitted by Joan Ennis

Summer is a busy time and the first Monday of summer vacation the library was the beginning of our busy summer days! Children and families are here at all times. We have had many questions of good books to read for both adults and children, during the summer. One ten-year-old boy wanted books on quantum mechanics!

This month has also been a busy month for adult programming. Bridget Draxler, faculty at St. Olaf, contacted me a few months ago about having a Jane Austen reading group. We did this

collaboration two years ago and read Northanger Abbey. This year we had a group read Mansfield Park. The group was limited to 12 participants, and we met on June 6, 13, and 20 for book discussion. On Thursday, June 27, many of us went to see the NAG's production of Mansfield Park. We really enjoyed the play, and the director met with our group after the play and answered questions. We had a final discussion the next day, on June 28 while enjoying a mini tea party, of tea and brownies.

A new writing group began this month, following Orlo Otteson's workshop on memoir writing. The group met for the first time on Monday, June 17. Twelve people attended, and most of the attendees read. Orlo is facilitating the group with me, and he is providing information on memoir writing in between readings.

- The Contemporary Women Writers Book Group met on June 18 and discussed *The Twelve Lives of Samuel Hawley* by Hannah Tinti.
- The Open Writing Group met on June 19, and we had a new member. Participants are reading a variety of writing – poetry, memoir, fiction, and nonfiction.

Starting this past week, phone calls from the City's main number are being answered at the reference desk. There are approximately 8 – 10 questions per day. It takes time to answer the questions because we are just learning the details of what each department does, and who works in which department.

Submitted by Jamie Stanley

Legal Reference Training Spring Workshop for Public Librarians: Part 2

In May, I wrote up a brief summary about a program I attended on May 3rd in St. Paul that was sponsored by the Minnesota Coalition of County Law Libraries and the Minnesota State Law Library.

As I wrote in my previous submission, this was an excellent program and reaffirmed to me that staff from the organizations that presented at the workshop share the common goal of providing access to justice for all Minnesotans. Those who presented were:

The **Minnesota Judicial Branch** hosts a rich website (www.mncourts.gov/) that provides information on a large number of legal topics. Also to be found here is information about the different courts in Minnesota, information about paying fines, obtaining legal forms, accessing case records filed within the state, as well as the ability to file a case in Minnesota. This website is the first stop for members of the public, attorneys, jurors, government partners, and the media seeking information about all aspects of the judicial system in Minnesota. Educational material for anyone interested in learning more about this branch of government is also found at this site.

Legal Services State Support - Legal Services State Support (State Support) is a project of the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition (MLSC), a group of seven legal aid programs that help low-income residents with a variety of legal matters. They manage the www.lawhelpmn.org website, the ProJusticeMN.org website for attorneys and the legal aid community, and the www.mnlegaladvice.org site.

Central Minnesota Legal Services also known as “**Legal Aid**” provides civil legal services and legal education for low-income persons in 21 counties in Central Minnesota. Dakota and Rice Counties do not participate in this program. Further information is available at <https://www.centralmnlegal.org/>

The **Minnesota State Law Librarian** is required by Minn. Stat. 134A.16 to “advise and assist in the development of county law libraries” throughout Minnesota. Of the 87 counties in the state, Dakota and St. Louis counties have two and three libraries within each respectively, Lyon/Lincoln share a library as do Chippewa/Lac Qui Parle and Yellow Medicine counties. Both Houston and Waseca Counties do not have law libraries. Information about the county law libraries can be located by accessing the homepage of the Minnesota State Law Library <https://mn.gov/law-library/>

In summary, I envision that the Northfield Library could support the work of these legal agencies by partnering with them and hosting legal information workshops and clinics on legal subjects of interest to many people in the community. I would be willing to undertake this project.

Submitted by Tyler Gardner

In the month of June I took the bookmobile to the Books & Stars kickoff event where Justin Roberts performed. It was a fun and crazy performance and the kids always love hearing Justin and they dance all over the place. It’s really a treat to get to take the bus out, be outside, be in public, and participate in a community gathering. 99 people came on the bus that evening. I also took the bookmobile out to the third Books & Stars event where the Wailing Loons performed. They played some really cool bluegrass/folk type music for a slightly older audience but the kids still got up and danced. 103 people checked out the Bookmobile that day!

After a discussion with the Library Reference Staff I added a “new to the collection” sign where new DVD’s are located. The purpose is to highlight recently purchased additions to the collection that aren’t necessarily “recently released”. It has been very popular and the items on that shelf are seeing high circulation.

I worked with Steve Maus to get a simple LibGuide created for the Digital Workstation. Hopefully we will be able to promote this to the community and get people in here to create!

In partnership with St. Olaf's Upward Bound program I am hosting a recent high school graduate for a job shadowing experience. Mercedes Yang, the student, came for the first time at the end of June and she will come three more times throughout July. The hope is to show her all of the things that the library does and have her work on a couple of small projects so she can see how varied work in the library can be.

Youth Services

Submitted by Emily Lloyd, Youth Services Librarian

June is one of our busiest months in Children's Services. We have the Summer Reading Program, the Page program, school visits and tours galore, afternoon drop-in activities twice a week, and several one-off programs: the 3rd Annual Worm Races, a storytelling show from the ScienceTellers—who combined real-time science experiments with a story about aliens escaping from earth--, a "What Should I Read This Summer?" book talking program for families, a showing of E.T., a pre-K dance party, an outreach storytime at Northfield Gymnastics, and, of course, Books & Stars performances. Worm



Races have swollen to the size of an average Books & Stars performance (146 attendees!), and



I'm grateful that Ziggy's continues to keep us in "thoroughbred racing worms". The addition of storytime half an hour before most Books & Stars performances has been nice, with an average attendance of 20 people who have expressed many thanks for the opportunity to attend storytime at an hour more convenient for their families. This is the first year we've offered online Summer Reading Program registration, and we've seen a steady stream of people taking advantage of the option. In future summers, both online registration and storytime before Books & Stars will be standard.

We've been lucky to have great weather for all June Books & Stars performances. I was especially thrilled to host the Wailing Loons, a band that I encountered at a

street festival in Minneapolis last year, as part of the line-up for their first Northfield performance. The six-piece band brought a stand-up bass, a full drum kit, a viola (the violist also stepped up on a wooden platform to clog while playing), a banjo, and more, and it was great to

expose kids and families to all of those instruments. Reading Buddies, a program where Pages read one-on-one with children going into first through fifth grade, has gone well, and the addition of a Spanish-speaking and reading teen volunteer has been wonderful! Since we began taking appointments (June 10), we've had 27 appointments. As of today, 628 youth have signed up for the Summer Reading Program. Prize-wise, I've tried to move to a strategy where books are one of the most-taken prizes, gathering hot titles over the course of the year from places like Half Price Books, in the hopes they'll be enticing enough for kids to choose them over "plasticky" prizes. The book cart is emptying, and I think this is working well (though there are still plenty of plastic cans).

One highlight of Summer PLUS visits and tours has been showing kids the newly robust kids' Spanish language collection and its location. Each class has at least a few Spanish-first-language kids, and I've enjoyed seeing eyes go wide with excitement when I show them this section.

We hired well with City Youth Services Intern Madelyn Hessian, who has excelled in everything she's been asked to do.

Finally, I took an interesting opportunity to participate in a babysitting class for teens at the Y. I trained 18 teens in early literacy and provided handouts, repurposing much of the content from my spring "How to Read to Your Grandkids" program.

Submitted by Layna Mestad, Youth Services/Teen Librarian



Summer is here! June has been a busy month finalizing summer programming details. TAB and page volunteers helped make Golden Snitches for our Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Interactive movie experience that took place last night (I had to include a picture of the Golden Snitches because they turned out to be darling). There were 18 people who attended, and we had great feedback from attendees! Each attendee received a goodie bag to interact with the movie. A big thank you to the Friends of the Northfield Public Library for funding the goods inside of the

bags—my personal favorite being the actual Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans (earthworm, dirt, vomit, rotten egg, booger flavored jelly beans from the wizarding world). Many funny faces were made after eating the Bertie Bott's jelly bean during the movie. We'll offer this same event for elementary-age kids and families in August.

The other big teen event this summer was supposed to be the Teen Talent Show. Unfortunately, we do not have enough submissions to fill 30 minutes of content as TAB had planned. Our

backup plan is to have another Teen Game Night given its success in April. This is scheduled for the end of July.

I'm excited to say that both the Northfield Arts Guild and Arcadia reached out to teen services to talk about collaborating with the library in the future. I will be meeting with representatives of both in the next month, and I look forward to seeing the ideas we come up with!

Circulation Services

Submitted by Kathy Rush, Technology Circulation Services Manager



On April 8th Nancy Sparby began as a Circulation Clerk 1. Nancy hails from Iowa and graduated from Luther College. She has been living in Northfield for 7 years. She worked for 5 ½ years for the Northfield High School. Nancy and her husband have two daughters ages 21 and 19. Nancy will be working at the circulation desk and in the back with check in and processing new materials. She enjoys working at the Circulation desk and serving our patrons. WELCOME NANCY!



On April 15th We promoted Karin Bartlett from the shelving staff to a Circulation Clerk 1. Karin had been working as a shelver for about 7 months. Karin has lived in Northfield for 22 years the same amount of time she has been married to her husband. They have two boys ages 13 & 11. She will be working at the circulation desk, in the back checking in, processing books and also learning book repair. Karin is very happy to be here! WELCOME KARIN!

Outreach, Shelving and Volunteer Services

Submitted by Laurie Kodet, Shelving/Outreach Services Supervisor/Volunteer Manager and Angelica Linder, Outreach Coordinator
Volunteers-

Volunteers are so valuable to expanding library services and help enhance the appearance of the library. Volunteers continue to work on shelf maintenance throughout the building, helping to keep our shelves looking their best. 24 volunteers delivered library materials to 67 homebound patrons this month.

Outreach-

-Book Bike at Riverwalk Market Fair

This is the third summer that the Book Bike will be present on Saturday mornings at Riverwalk Market Fair. Library staff members take turns staffing the Bike. They can be the bike rider and storyteller or they can have one of the trained library volunteers be their rider and/or storyteller. This is a great way for library staff to engage with the community.



- June 1- 89 visitors, 2 new library cards, 28 storytime attendees
- June 8- 63 visitors, 23 storytime attendees
- June 15- 46 visitors, 31 storytime attendees
- June 22- 44 visitors, 12 storytime attendees

-Bookmobile at Tuesdays in the Park

This is the second year bringing the bookmobile to Tuesdays in the Park. These events are a collaboration with Growing up Healthy and Northfield Promise promoting social connectedness. Northfield Promise volunteers ride the book bike and give away books and the bookmobile is onsite to issue library cards, checkout materials, and share community resource information.

- June 18- 55 visitors, 3 library cards
- June 25- 24 visitors

-Bookmobile at Books and Stars

Books and Stars events are held on Wednesday evenings in the summer for community members of all ages.

The bookmobile is present to issue library cards and checkout materials.

- June 12- 99 visitors
- June 19- 70 visitors
- June 26- 103 visitors

-On June 17, the bookmobile made a visit to Northfield Gymnastics' Preschool Camp. The visit included a storytime and there were 24 attendees.

-On June 22, the bookmobile was present for the Y-Tri event, where 97 people visited the bookmobile.

-Looking ahead to fall, Laurie has scheduled staff to attend Ready, Set, Go Day (open house) at Sibley, Greenvale, and Bridgewater elementary schools. Staff will be onsite to issue library cards and promote library services. Staff will also be onsite for Operation Backpack in August again to issue library cards, do storytimes, and activities.

City ID

On June 13, Laurie visited Northfield Retirement Community to issue City IDs. I took four applications, one for a woman who just turned 93.



Link Services

On June 26, four library volunteers applied the mailing labels to the July Link Services Newsletter. These great volunteers were able to finish that big job in one hour's time. The July newsletters were mailed on June 28. The newsletters are available online at <http://guides.mynpl.org/resources>.

Other

On June 10th and 11th, Angelica had an opportunity to be a panelist reviewing grant applications for the Minnesota State Arts Board. Serving as a panelist gave me an insights on the format and review criteria for grant applications and insights in to how to create a solid proposal. It was intellectually stimulating to see new ideas and approaches on how to enrich the community with different art forms. It also was a great way to meet new colleagues.

On July 5 Angelica will resume Spanish Storytime Fridays at 4:30.

Angelica and Laurie have begun planning for 2019 Hispanic Heritage Celebration September 14th.

Northfield Poet Laureate—on vacation!

Submitted by Rob Hardy, Northfield Poet Laureate